

actual evidence of their senses and fell back on a rigid and unyielding system, a stereotype.

"When we make a split-second decision," Payne says, "we are really vulnerable to being guided by our stereotypes and prejudices, even ones we may not necessarily endorse or believe." Payne has tried all kinds of techniques to reduce this bias. To try to put them on their best behavior, he told his subjects that their performance would be scrutinized later by a classmate. It made them even more biased. He told some people precisely what the experiment was about and told them explicitly to avoid stereotypes based on race. It didn't matter. The only thing that made a difference, Payne found, was slowing the experiment down and forcing people to wait a beat before identifying the object on the screen. Our powers of thin-slicing and snap judgments are extraordinary. But even the giant computer in our unconscious needs a moment to do its work. The art experts who judged the Getty kouros needed to *see* the kouros before they could tell whether it was a fake. If they had merely glimpsed the statue through a car window at sixty miles per hour, they could only have made a wild guess at its authenticity.

For this very reason, many police departments have moved, in recent years, toward one-officer squad cars instead of two-. That may sound like a bad idea, because surely having two officers work together makes more sense. Can't they provide backup for each other? Can't they more easily and safely deal with problematic situations? The answer in both cases is no. An officer with a partner is no safer than an officer on his own. Just as

important, two-officer teams are more likely to have complaints filed against them. With two officers, encounters with citizens are far more likely to end in an arrest or an injury to whomever they are arresting or a charge of assaulting a police officer. Why? *Because when police officers are by themselves, they slow things down, and when they are with someone else, they speed things up.* "All cops want two-man cars," says de Becker. "You have a buddy, someone to talk to. But one-man cars get into less trouble because you reduce bravado. A cop by himself makes an approach that is entirely different. He is not as prone to ambush. He doesn't charge in. He says, 'I'm going to wait for the other cops to arrive.' He acts more kindly. He allows more time."

Would Russ, the young man in the car in Chicago, have ended up dead if he had been confronted by just one officer? It's hard to imagine that he would have. A single officer—even a single officer in the heat of the chase—would have had to pause and wait for backup. It was the false safety of numbers that gave the three officers the bravado to rush the car. "You've got to slow the situation down," Fyfe says. "We train people that time is on their side. In the Russ case, the lawyers for the other side were saying that this was a fast-breaking situation. But it was only fast-breaking because the cops let it become one. He was stopped. He wasn't going anywhere."

What police training does, at its best, is teach officers how to keep themselves out of this kind of trouble; to avoid the risk of momentary autism. In a traffic stop, for instance, the officer is trained to park behind the car. If it's at night, he shines his brights directly into the car. He

Stereotypes and
Prejudice.

Are we safer
with 2 policemen
and not 1?

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